

To: Sebring, Meridith[Sebring.Meridith@epa.gov]
From: Cheatham, Reggie
Sent: Fri 8/7/2015 6:37:39 PM
Subject: FW: EOC Spot Report: Update #1, Region 8, Abandoned Mine Release into Animas River; San Juan County, CO

FYSA

Reggie Cheatham, Acting Director

Office of Emergency Management, USEPA

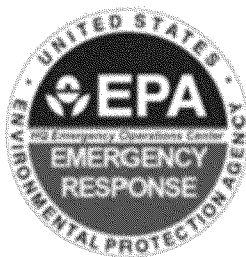
202.564.8003 (O); 202.689.9400 (M);

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From: Eoc, Epahq
Sent: Friday, August 07, 2015 1:53 PM
Subject: EOC Spot Report: Update #1, Region 8, Abandoned Mine Release into Animas River; San Juan County, CO

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EOC Spot Report: Update #1, Region 8, Abandoned Mine Release into Animas River; San Juan County, CO

US Environmental Protection Agency

Report as of 1300 EDT on 08/07/2015

Overview: On August 5th, an EPA and Colorado State Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety team was working to investigate and address contamination at the abandoned Gold King Mine in San Juan County, CO. This work unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine wastewater into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates indicate that the release is approximately one million gallons that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach and all were unharmed.

The acidic mine water associated with this release contains high levels of sediment and metals. EPA teams are conducting sampling and visual observations today and will be monitoring river conditions over the next several days. EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes.

Water continues to be released from the mine at a slower rate. EPA has met with San Juan County, CO and will be meeting with La Plata County, CO later today. Water sampling was conducted and analysis is pending, and pH levels and other water quality parameters are being monitored.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: San Juan County officials are engaged in the response to the release. State officials are also on scene. Following the release, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) notified water users downstream so they could take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes.

EPA Actions: A R8 OSC met with San Juan County leaders to discuss the release into the Animas River. R8 requested support from EPA's Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft and the plane is in route to collect photographic information to response officials.

A R8 OCS has been deployed to the area. R8 staff are coordinating with relevant county and city officials. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users.

R8 staff will meet with the Durango City Engineer to analyze and implement measures to protect the Durango drinking water supply. R8 is also coordinating with Region 6 on the incident. EPA will also be assessing damage near the mine portal and any residual releases of water at the mine site.

Media Interest: Medium

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/08/07/sludge-from-colorado-mine-spill-flows-down-river-toward-new-mexico/>

<http://time.com/3987958/mine-spiller-yellow-river-colorado/>

The HQ EOC will continue to monitor and provided updates as needed.

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